

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7081

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5973

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SCUL, AR

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY RECTOR RESIGNS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 5810

1. BA UNIVERSITY RECTOR CONSTANTINI RESIGNED YESTERDAY (SEPT 13). IN LENGTHY LETTER OF RESIGNATION PRESENTED TO EDUCATION MIN BRUERA, CONSTANTINI SAID HE WAS GIVING UP POSITION "WHICH I ACCEPTED AT PRESIDENT VIDELA'S REQUEST" BECAUSE HIS VIEWS OF HOW UNIVERSITY SHOULD BE RUN WERE NOT SHARED BY EDUCATION MINISTER AND IT HAD BECOME CLEAR LATTER'S VIEWS WERE TO PREVAIL. CONSTANTINI WARNED OF CONSEQUENCES DESTRUCTION OF UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY MIGHT HAVE, NOT ONLY FOR UNIVERSITY BUT FOR NATION AS A WHOLE.

2. IN PRESS CONFERENCE LAST NIGHT, CONSTANTINI AGAIN EMPHASIZED FACT THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED BY PRESIDENT VIDELA TO ACCEPT THE RECTORSHIP AND THAT HIS RESIGNATION FROM THAT POST WAS DIRECT RESULT OF HIS DISAGREEMENTS WITH EDUCATION MINISTER. HE INDICATED FURTHER THAT HIS DECISION TO RESIGN HAD BEEN REACHED AFTER YESTERDAY MORNING'S MEETING OF RECTORS WITH BRUERA DURING WHICH IT BECAME CLEAR LATTER WOULD HAVE HIS WAY INCENTRALIZING UNIVERSITY SYSTEM UNDER MINISTRY AND DURING WHICH BRUERA RATIFIED NEW ADMISSIONS LAW FOR UNIVERSITIES (OVER CONSTANTINI'S OBJECTIONS).

3. AS OF SEPT 7 (SEE REFTEL), CONSTANTINI'S RESIGNATION WAS FULLY EXPECTED. ON SEPT 10, HOWEVER, HE MET WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA
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AND LATTER GAVE IMPRESSION OF BACKING CONSTANTINI'S VIEWS TO SUCH

EXTENT THAT PRESS NEW DAY PREDICTED LATTER WOULD REMAIN AT UNIVERSITY AND THAT CONFLICT WITH BRUERA WOULD BE SETTLED (PRE-UMABLY IN FAVOR OF CONSTANTINI). CONSTANTINI TOO APPARENTLY WAS MISLED BY VIDELA'S ATTITUDE AT SEPT 10 MEETING , FOR WHEN ASKED BY NEWSMEN LAST NIGHT HOW HE COULD RECONCILE VIDELA'S APPARENT AGREEMENT WITH HIM ON SEPT 10 WITH NOW APPARENT AGREEMENT WITH BRUERA, CONSTANTINI ANSWERED, "I'M ASKING MYSELF THE SAME QUESTION?"

4. COMMENT: DESPITE CONSTATNTINI'S PUZZLEMENT INDICATED ABOVE, SOURCE IN OFFICE OF PRESIDENCY CONTINUES TO INSIST TO EMBOFFS THAT VIDELA AND VIOLA DO INDEED SYMPATHIZE WITH CONSTANTINI'S POSITION AND WOULD SUPPORT IT WERE IT NOT SO POLITICALLY INEXPEDIENT TO DO SO (SEE REFTTEL). THIS POINTS UP AGAIN FACT THAT PRESIDENT VIDELA AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE NOT IN CLEAR CONTROL AND CANNOT ALWAYS SHAPE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES AND POLICIES AS THEY WOULD WISH. DAO SOURCES IN MILITARY CONTINUE TO REPORT THAT BRUERA DOES NOT HAVE CONFIDENCE OF VIDELA, BUT THAT VIDELA DOES NOT WISH PROVOKE DIFFICULTIES WITHIN MILITARY BY FIRING BRUERA AT THIS MOMENT.
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